



# BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA

PREVENTION · EDUCATION · ADVOCACY

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EXHIBIT 34  
DATE 1-25-07  
HB 2

January 25, 2007

The Hon. Edith Clark, Chair  
Joint Appropriations Subcommittee for Health and Human Services

Dear Rep. Clark and Members of the Committee,

The Brain Injury Association respectfully requests that Committee appropriate \$300,000 for the 2009 biennium to fund Montana's Resource Facilitation Service ["RFS"].

The RFS is an innovative self-advocacy support service available to brain injury survivors and their families. During its first year, RFS served 284 survivors, some referred by hospitals at discharge.

Montana's RFS is faithful to the model developed in Minnesota and uses their software to schedule calls and track cases. It is a two year program because research has shown that the effects of brain injury may take that long to become evident. Just as importantly, it contacts survivors immediately after hospital discharge, when individuals and families first begin struggling to understand how their lives have changed. RFS is especially valuable for the hundreds of people who receive mild to moderate brain injury, because while the changes they and their families experience are profound, services are very few.

The Association is very proud of its role in developing the RFS, in partnership with the Montana Council on Disabilities and the Senior and Long Term Care Division, and with funding provided by a federal Traumatic Brain Injury Demonstration Grant. Since the first grant installment in 2001, the Association has helped the state conduct a needs assessment, identify the most promising services models, and then build the RFS, which just completed its pilot year. Now, the Demonstration Grant has concluded and a very small implementation grant provides limited support. Without state funding, the Association will be unable to sustain RFS.

There are more than 10,000 Montanans living with disability as a result of traumatic brain injury and there will be more. Today, their ranks are being swelled by returning veterans of the Iraq war who report receiving little or no assistance from the Veteran's Administration in understanding and coping with brain injury.

Please help us to protect our investment in this valuable public health service.

Yours truly,

Lucas Foust,  
President, Board of Directors